HISTORIC PRESERVATION

QUARTERLY

of the

National Council for

Historic Sites and Buildings

Volume IV, No. 1 Spring 1952

WOODLAWN PLANTATION

With May ninth set for the formal re-opening of *Woodlawn Plantation* by the National Trust, the process of interior restoration is nearing completion. As evidences of modern living are hidden or removed, and original walls and woodwork are repaired or restored, the house gradually comes to life, resuming the appearance it had in the days of Nelly Custis and Lawrence Lewis.

Careful investigation of interior finish disclosed many unusual features and brought to light a painted panel that was originally under the stair window. Graining effects were widely used. On the first floor, the pine doors were grained to represent mahogany and walnut. Maple and cherry prevailed upstairs. Some of the doors also carry painted inlay stripes in the panels.

The wall colors seem surprising in their apparent modern decor. The dark green Drawing Room has a green-white wood trim set off by mahogany doors and chair-rail tops. The fine plaster cornice has regained its original soft tan-mauve color, making it the impressive feature of the room that was intended originally.

A modern ballroom at the north end of the mansion is being utilized as the visitors' entrance and orientation center. This area will also lend itself to use as a small museum. As the visitor now enters the main hall he is able to obtain a full view of the winding stairway.

The natural beauty of the grounds requires little to make them a fitting setting for the house. A screen to conceal modern buildings is being planted and flowers and shrubs in keeping with the period of the house will be introduced. Plans are completed for a new driveway to provide a more satisfactory entrance from U.S. Highway No. 1. An adequate parking area is also part of the plan.

Furnishings of the house are far from complete. For the present, the existing collection will be augmented by gifts and loans. It is expected that the completed backgrounds of the redecorated rooms will stimulate an interest on the part of a widening and appreciative public to participate in the refurnishing program.

Woodlawn Plantation, Mount Vernon, Virginia.
Photograph courtesy Virginia State Chamber of Commerce
East elevation overlooking *Mount Vernon* and the Potomac River. Of this site, George Washington said, "Few better sites for a house than Gray's Hill, and that range, are to be found in this Country or elsewhere."

712 JACKSON PLACE

This first *Quarterly* in its new format is being issued from new headquarters, to which the National Council moved on February 1, from former quarters in the restored Octagon house owned by the American Institute of Architects. This brings together the offices of the National Council and National Trust and gives more room for an expanding program. The house on Jackson Place is itself one of the old ones facing Lafayette Square with a view of the Park, the White House, and historic St. John's Church. Its rear windows overlook one of the country's most distinguished backyards—the Blair House. 712 is also notable in the annals of Washington as the home of statesmen and public officials, including Major Henry R. Rathbone, who grappled with Booth and was injured by his dagger when Lincoln was assassinated.

Hardinge Scholle, staff Consultant, who will be in Europe on leave this summer, plans to attend some of the sessions of the Summer school in Shropshire, England, for the Study of English Architecture, Art and Social History sponsored by the National Trust of Great Britain.

Miles Charest of Washington, a Princeton graduate, has joined the staff of the Council as a research assistant, succeeding James R. Bowman, who served in that capacity on detached duty from the Library of Congress, and who has recently been promoted to subject cataloging. Mr. Charest is continuing work on the national inventory of historic sites and buildings open to the public.

Mrs. Francis B. Crowninshield, Vice President of the National Council, has been appointed chairman of a new Committee for Historic Preservation designed to include individuals from a nation-wide zoning of groups of states. The object of the committee is to make the work and aims of the Trust and Council better known and to increase membership.

Since the last *Quarterly* was published, the following member organizations have joined the National Council:

Association for the Preservation of Tennessee Antiquities

D. C. Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution

The Edison Institute (Michigan)

The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum (Delaware)

Mount Rushmore National Memorial Society of Black Hills (South Dakota)

San Antonio Conservation Society (Texas)

Sleepy Hollow Restorations, Inc. (New York)

LEGISLATIVE PROGRESS

During the past year many states and communities have passed bills and ordinances to assure the preservation of their historic sites and buildings. The State of Delaware passed "An Act for the Preservation of Buildings, Sites and Objects of Historic Interest in the State and Providing for a Trust Fund for Their Preservation and Appropriation Therefor". The Act was patterned closely after our National Trust Act. A bill was introduced into the New York State Legislature for a $50,000 appropriation for purchase of lands at Manassas to be presented to the National Park Service as a memorial to New York's Civil War dead. A bill has been introduced in the House of Representatives to permit the Secretary of the Army to acquire a plot of land in Brooklyn, N. Y., as a memorial to the 256 Maryland soldiers who were buried there after the battle of August 27, 1776.

To save a 1400-acre tract in Moccasin Bend of the Tennessee River from commercial exploitation, the State of Tennessee has appropriated $100,000, the city and county are expected to appropriate $50,000 each and the Chattanooga Kiwanis Club is trying to raise $50,000 to buy the land to incorporate in Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park.

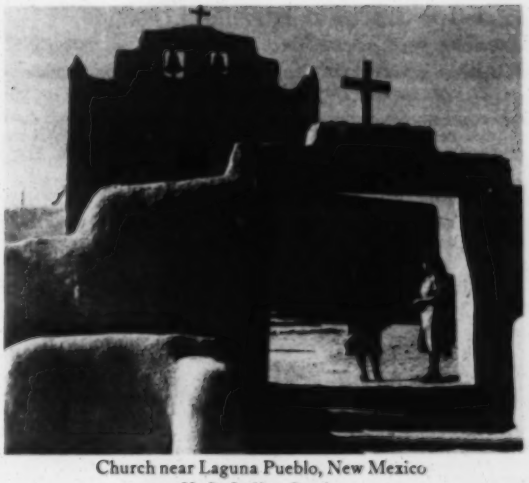
In the field of national legislation, the bill establishing Virgin Islands National Historic Site was signed by the Secretary of the Interior on March 4. A bill for further appropriation for land purchase for Independence National Historical Park Project was introduced in the House on February 12.

HIGHWAY MARKERS

A limited number of reprints from *Planning and Civic Comment* of "Historic Marking along the Highways of America" by Arthur Wilcox, Assistant Professor in Park Management of Michigan State College, are available upon request by Council members. This study covers a brief history of the movement, a study of construction methods and maintenance costs, location, marker design, and a list of agencies participating in state-wide roadside historic marking. It is illustrated and provides an excellent introduction to the subject for those planning similar programs in their areas.

SOUTHWEST INVENTORY

As a first step toward a national inventory of historic sites and buildings open to the public, the National Council has just completed a preliminary



Church near Laguna Pueblo, New Mexico
U. S. Indian Service

inventory of the Southwest, which includes Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Texas and Utah. The inventory consists of 26 pages, with a 7-page selected reading list. Copies have been mailed to historical societies, state agencies and interested individuals in the states concerned for corrections, revisions and additions. In its final form, the inventory will be available to Council members and others interested.

"MONTEZUMA—*YOUR AREA NEXT?*"

H. Everest Clements, Vice Chairman and Treasurer of the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge Protective Committee, in a guest editorial in the January-March issue of *National Parks Magazine* reports: "The state planners, the bulldozers and the engineers have won again. The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Land Management, without an apparent struggle and without calling on their many friends for aid, gave the New York State Thruway Authority on September 4, 1951, a right-of-way permit for its five hundred million dollar superhighway to invade and bisect the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge near Seneca Falls, New York."

Mr. Clements attributes the failure to prevent this invasion to the lack of any information on the proposal being made public by the responsible officials concerned, and also the defeatist attitude of conservationists who felt that organized opposition at such a late date would be futile. He concludes on a note that holds a warning for those wishing to preserve and protect our natural resources and historic heritage, "At Montezuma, a lesson has been learned by many people. Your area must not be next."

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NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS

President: U. S. Grant, 3rd.
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"Of Making Many Books . . ."

Even the Bible has noted, "Of making many books there is no end." Those of us who are supposed to know something about current literature in the preservation field are often hard put to keep the pace. Here, however, is too-brief notice of a few books that have made us happy in the last several months.

A number of National Council members have recently written fine books. Ronald F. Lee's *United States: Historical and Architectural Monuments* fills a long-standing need, for it synthesizes in 121 pages the preservation movement in this country, with particular emphasis on the National Park Service. The first of a 21-volume series on preservation in the Americas, it was published by the Comision de Historia del Instituto Panamericano de Geografia e Historia (Av. del Observatoria, 192, Mexico 18, D. F.—$1.45).

Two Council members were given the annual book awards of the Society of Architectural Historians in January: Anthony Garvan's *Architecture and Town Planning in Colonial Connecticut* (Yale University Press), an erudite but readable study in a specialized field, and Samuel Wilson's edition of Benjamin Latrobe's *Impressions Respecting New Orleans: Diary and Sketches, 1818-1820*, an interesting, illuminating presentation of the great architect's thoughts on his Louisiana sojourn.

Two other Council members offered their contributions in vastly different forms. Kenneth Dunshee's *As You Pass By* (Hastings House) is a magnificently imprinted random history of New York City, with an introduction by George McAneny. Morton Yarmon deals with *Early American Antique Furniture* (Fawcett Books) in a practical, inexpensive, but profusely illustrated handbook.

Frederick L. Rath, Jr.

BELLE GROVE

The once majestic "pink mansion" near White Chapel, La., long a dramatic ruin in the plantation country, was swept by fire in March. Once half a mile from the Mississippi, *Belle Grove*, like so many formerly magnificent ante-bellum mansions in Louisiana, was threatened by the encroaching river which had pushed within 100 yards of the towering Corinthian columns of its famous portico.

BRUMIDI 1805—1880

On the anniversary of his death, members of Congress, the Department of the Interior and special guests gathered at Glenwood cemetery to mark the grave of Constantino Brumidi, the Italian fresco artist who devoted 25 years of his life to decorating the U.S. Capitol. Mrs. John Murdock, his biographer, was responsible for locating the unmarked grave of the man who died as the result of a fall sustained while completing the Rotunda frieze. The tablet quotes Brumidi, *My one ambition and my daily prayer is that I may live long enough to make beautiful the Capitol of the one country on earth in which there is liberty.*

ARCHAEOLOGY

Raymond S. Baby, Curator of Archaeology of the Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, reports in the December *Museum Echoes* on the exploration of the Cordray and Goldsmith mounds in Central Ohio. In addition to skeletal fragments, numerous artifacts were recovered including an unusual minature clay bowl, flint blades, projectile points and tubular tobacco pipes.

Excavations at Fort Frederica National Monument on St. Simon's Island, Georgia, by the National Park Service have revealed extensive evidence of the nature of this fortified settlement of the eighteenth century which served as headquarters for General James Oglethorpe in his operations against the Spaniards in Florida. The town within the fort had been buried for a century and a half, but excavations revealed the foundations of several old houses and a well yielded fragments of Delft ware, fine Chinese porcelain, weapons, apothecary jars, and other evidences of the community's life.

PROPOSED PRESERVATION

Philadelphia, Pa. The Chestnut Hill Shopping Center Development Group, according to the *News Letter of the Citizen's Council on City Planning in Philadelphia*, is engaged in "one of the most comprehensive planning programs for revitalizing an established neighborhood." The redevelopment plan includes tree planting, mapping, remodeling whole blocks of store fronts to conform to the dominating colonial style of the area, transportation studies, and off-street parking.

Yakima, Wash. A group of individuals and organizations in Yakima are attempting to preserve Fort Simcoe, an 1856-1859 fort and former Indian agency on the Yakima Indian reservation.

Lexington, Ky. The Garden Club of Lexington plans to restore the gardens at *Ashland*, the home of Henry Clay. The original mansion, built in 1806, was destroyed and was succeeded by the present mansion in 1856. It contains a fine collection of Clay family portraits, furniture and other memorabilia, including clothing worn by Mr. and Mrs. Clay. It is open to the public under the management of the Henry Clay Memorial Foundation. The Garden Club selected this project because of Clay's interest and devotion to horticulture and farming. He is supposed to have said, "I am in one respect better off than Moses. He died in sight of the Promised Land. I occupy as good a farm as he would have had if he reached it."

Lynchburg, Va. Members of the Quaker Memorial Presbyterian Church agreed unanimously at a congregational meeting to establish a fund for the restoration of the old Quaker Meeting House and for the upkeep of old Quaker Cemetery where the city's founder, John Lynch, is buried.

Wading River, Long Island, N. Y. The Wading River Historical Society has recently acquired the old Chauncey Howell Home on Gabriel Mills Road, and plans to restore the Early Republican building for use as a Society Library and Museum.

Eastern Shore, Md. Under the joint sponsorship of the Maryland Historical Society, the Society for the Preservation of Maryland Antiquities and the Eastern Shore Society, a program of restoration which will include about 52 early structures has been inaugurated. A survey has been completed, and the buildings proposed for restoration include early manor houses, churches, meeting houses and courthouses. Arthur A. Houghton, Jr., a member of the Executive Board of the Council, has been one of the leading proponents of the plan.

Staten Island, N. Y. The Britton Cottage, built before 1695 by Obadiah Holmes and one of the finest surviving examples of early architecture in New York, has become a property of the Staten Island Historical Society. It is in close proximity to the Metropolitan area, and after repairs and reconstruction will open to the public as part of the Society's program of presenting "living history."

Santa Monica, Calif. The Larimer House, one of the oldest in the city, has been restored and opened to the public as a shrine honoring early California residents, by the Paul Heinley Company of Santa Monica.

Amsterdam, N. Y. Guy Park Manor, reported in December in "Passing Parade," is now off the critical list. It, and the Clinton House in Poughkeepsie, will be retained by the state in the absence of specific legislation authorizing relinquishing them. The next problem will be that of obtaining funds for their proper preservation and administration.

Elmhurst, Long Island, N. Y. By an exchange of lands between two city boards, the old Moore farm in Elmhurst, birthplace of Dr. Clement C. Moore, author of the beloved children's classic, *The Night Before Christmas*, has been saved from development as an apartment site and will become a city park.

Coquille, Ore. Members of the Coos-Curry Pioneer and Historical Association at their last monthly meeting voted to place the matter of public support of the pioneer museum on the 1952 ballot.

Palisades Park, N. J. Fort Lee, a major Revolutionary War fortification which long ago crumbled into the earth, is to be reconstructed south of the New Jersey terminus of the George Washington Bridge, as part of a program for preservation of the Palisades begun in 1900 by the Palisades Interstate Park Commission. Old maps and plans show sections of breastworks, embankments and gun emplacements, and enough evidence has been uncovered to mark the spot where General George Washington stood on Nov. 16, 1777, watching the British storm and capture Fort Washington across the Hudson.

New York, N. Y. Six famous Bronx structures have been tentatively recommended for perpetual preservation as public monuments by the Municipal Art Society. A city-wide roster of buildings to be nominated for preservation was prepared in cooperation with the Society of Architectural Historians. The six are St. Ann's Church, St. Peter's Parish House, Van Cortlandt Manor House, Poe Cottage, Bartow House and Ferris House.

PRESERVATION IN PROGRESS

Pawtucket, R. I.—On Twelfth Night, the officers and trustees of Cocumscussoc Association were entertained at a supper celebrating completion of work on the newly restored "Hall" of *Smith's Castle.*

Austin, Texas—The French Legation, erected in 1840 by John Peter Isador Alphonse Dubois de Saligny, charge d'affaires of His Majesty the King of France to the Republic of Texas, bought by the State and placed it in the custody of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, is being restored by the Colonial Dames and the Violet Garden Club.

Plainfield, N. J.—The Plainfield and North Plainfield Historical Society is attempting to raise an $800 fund to pay a balance due for repairs on Drake House, a 1746 landmark which served as General Washington's headquarters on the day of that city's biggest battle of the Revolution.

Oyster Bay, Long Island, N. Y.—One of the few pre-Revolutionary houses in the region, *Raynham Hall* (1740), is being restored by the Town Hall of Oyster Bay. British officers under Col. John Graves Simcoe were billeted there from 1778 to 1781, and the room used by Major John Andre, who was condemned by the Continentals as a spy, is still intact.

Washington, D. C.—With the completion of the remodeling of two houses on 3rd Street, S. E., and two small studios on Library Court, Mrs. Una Hanbury, a Council member, is continuing her work of saving old houses in the Capitol Hill section and adapting their interiors to modern living.

ACTIVE PRESERVATION

Wapwallopen, Pa.—After a lapse of many years the 117-year-old church in this small community has been restored and reopened through the active leadership of the Wapwallopen Historical Society and public-spirited members of the community who donated both money and services to the cause.

Greenfield Village, Mich.—After being transported from its original site in Pennsylvania, the small log cabin in which William McGuffey, creator of the *McGuffey's Reader*, was born, has been restored and opened to the public.

Searsport, Me. — The Penobscot Marine Museum has restored and opened the Jeremiah Merithew House as the Captain's House. Built in 1816 by one of the town's leading shipmasters, the house consists of two and one half stories, a two-story ell and attached barn. It will contain the exhibits of the museum, which is devoted to a shipping history of the Maine coast, formerly housed in the museum's Old Town Hall Building. The latter, itself a restoration, will be used for changing exhibitions, lectures and meetings.

Ephrata, Pa.—Restoration work at Ephrata Cloisters is to be resumed in the near future with an appropriation of $30,000 provided by the state legislature. The Cloisters ranks as one of the most frequently visited of the state shrines. The community was built between 1735 and 1749 by the religious society of Seventh Day Adventists founded by Conrad Beisel. Restoration began in 1941.

Williamsburg, Va.—A Democracy Workshop was held in February, at which Miss Dorothy Gordon of the *New York Times* and Joseph E. Johnson, President of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, served as moderators. Key high school students, including winners of the nation-wide Voice of Democracy contest, with teachers, chaperones, and guest authorities, participated in the series of roundtable discussions on "Problems of Democracy at Home" and "Problems of Democracy Abroad", with particular emphasis on those confronting the younger generation today.

Sturbridge Village, Mass.—Dedication of the Isaiah Thomas Printing office, now being re-erected and restored at Old Sturbridge Village, will take place on April 27. The program will coincide with the New England Conference of Printing House Craftsmen, which meets in Worcester the day before. Thomas was one of the outstanding printers of the early republic, and to continue his fight against the British during the Revolution moved his office from Boston to Worcester, where he published the *Massachusetts Spy*, built up a large printing and book business, and became founder of the American Antiquarian Society.

New Rochelle, N. Y.—The cottage presented to Thomas Paine by the grateful state of New York for his services as "penman of the American Revolution" is now open to the public under the auspices of the Thomas Paine National Historical Association. A feature of the museum is a library of biographies of Paine, a collection of his writings and pamphlets and facilities for research.

FOREIGN PRESERVATION

Great Britian—Under the Town and Country Planning Act, Section 30, a complete listing of buildings of special historic or architectural interest is planned. Once listed, these buildings may not be destroyed or altered without the knowledge of the Minister of Local Government and Planning. Already some 17,000 buildings have been listed and the eventual total is estimated at 70,000 to 80,000. The problems involved in carrying out this vast preservation program are two-fold — obtaining necessary funds and finding experts knowledgeable in restoration matters.

Much publicity has been given to the financial aspects and too little to the urgent need for technicians and architects with specialized training, according to the *Architectural Review*, November 1951. Standard architectural training and experience is not adequate for work of this kind and architectural schools very naturally emphasize the creative side rather than preservation and restoration. Construction of medieval vaults, and the profiles of classical moldings are not matters of importance to the modern-day architect, but they are of immense importance to any architect involved in the care of ancient buildings. To try to find some solution to this problem, which will grow more acute as time passes, several short courses in preservation and repair work have been given. Also, the Bartlett School of Architecture of the University of London has initiated a one-year certificate course. The syllabus includes such subjects as the stability of vaults, structural decay, wind pressure on towers and spires, the effects of bell vibration. The *Architectural Review* feels that there is a need not so much for special training of architects but of the training of a special kind of architect, and this special kind of architect would never lack for work! Other countries have felt this need and in Prague, Florence, Venice, Amsterdam and Stockholm, preservation and restoration courses are included in the curriculum.

Rome, Italy—The Church of Saints John and Paul, which traditionally dates back to the 4th century, with its adjoining monastery and bell tower, is currently being restored by Francis Cardinal Spellman and his friends. Situated on one of Rome's seven original hills, the church became the New York cardinal's special church in Rome upon his elevation in 1946. At one point, archaeologists dug down 20 feet to expose the huge arches of the Temple of Claudius built in the first century of the Christian era, which have served as foundations for the monastery for a thousand years.

Homewood Villa, Johns Hopkins
John S. Spurbeck

WYMAN FOUNDATION

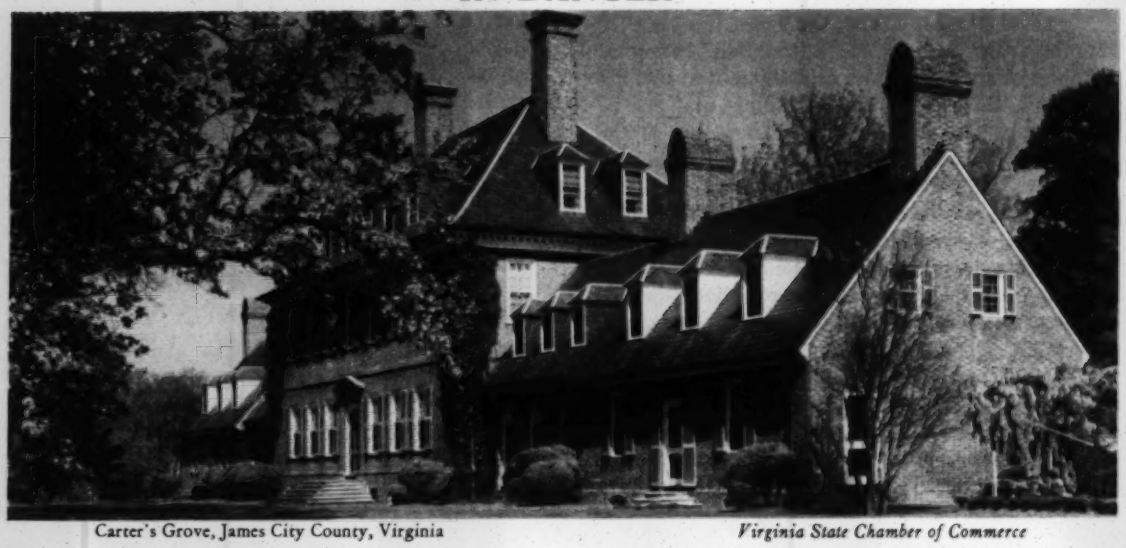
Homewood Villa, on the campus of Johns Hopkins University, an early Victorian structure, the home of William Wyman, is the latest historic house to find friends opposed to its destruction because of its delapidated condition and failure to meet modern needs. Wyman Foundation has been organized for the purpose of raising the necessary funds to save this Italian Villa and adapt it in some way to the needs of a modern university.

BY FIRE AND "PROGRESS"

In Grand Haven, Michigan, the ornate 102-year-old mansion built by the Wooley family in the old lumbering era was the scene of one of the biggest fires in the town's history. Fire also destroyed the Muddy Creek Elementary School, left Grace Chapel (established 1732) with only its outer walls standing, and for a while jeopardized historic Muddy Creek Church in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. *Chandler's Hope* in Port Tobacco, Maryland, was partially damaged by fire which swept up from the kitchen of this early seventeenth century structure, which is known as the first "monastery for women" in the British colonies in America.

To make way for a new freeway, the historic home of Capt. William Roberts in San Lorenzo, California, will be moved 400 feet north from its original site and will lose part of its famous showplace gardens. In Allentown, Pennsylvania, the circular stone barn erected in 1830 as an Indian trade warehouse has been razed to make way for a traffic circle for Pine Street Bridge.The famous old Brevoort Hotel in Greenwich Village, New York, and ten adjoining brownstone dwellings, including the Mark Twain house, will be razed to make way for "a tall ultra-modern apartment building" under terms of a 105-year lease between trustees of Sailors Snug Harbor and a firm of builders. The 99-year-old home of General de Bonneville was wrecked recently in St. Louis. An old grist mill in Patapsco, Maryland, is threatened by a new reservoir project.

IN DANGER



Carter's Grove, James City County, Virginia — *Virginia State Chamber of Commerce*

Military installations, including a practice railroad, threaten to impinge upon this famous old plantation near Williamsburg, Virginia.

Pottstown, Pa.—The National Council intervened with Pennsylvania officials to urge reconsideration of a decision to re-open a road through Pottsgrove at Pottstown, thus invalidating the fine restoration of the old stone house of ironmaster John Potts, founder of the town. The house, used as Washington's headquarters, is a restoration of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

Galesburg, Ill.—On April 12, along with 17 obsolete rural schools, Lombard Old Main, built in 1856 as the principal building of the college, will be placed on sale. "Friends of Lombard" are launching a counter-petition to keep the castellated Romanesque old structure from destruction.

San Francisco, Calif.—Of five octagonal houses built in San Francisco at the height of the craze for building in the manner of the Fowlers—"the practical phrenologists"—only two remain. One of these is now scheduled for sale and probable razing.

Richmond, Va.—The William Byrd Branch of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities reports in *Old Richmond News* that another of the city's fine Greek revival mansions, the Cecil Memorial Church House, is scheduled for wrecking by the Second Presbyterian Church. Location of a proposed expressway on 19th street places in jeopardy three blocks between Marshall and Franklin which retain more of their fine pre-Civil War architecture than any in the city. On the basis of this threat the Branch has once more opened with the Planning Commission the question of historic zoning.

Portsmouth, N. H.—Eighteen old communities in the seacoast region of New Hampshire have united in a Regional Citizens' Committee to urge relocation of a mammoth jet bomber base in an area which would not wipe out century-old towns, but would use undeveloped land equally near transportation.

Glen Cove, Long Island, N. Y.—Long Island's "Gold Coast" is rapidly losing the palatial homes built at a cost of millions of dollars by merchant princes of the 80's and 90's. The day of the 25 bathroom house with its retinue of servants has passed. Heirs want neither responsibility of maintenance nor tax burdens. In recent years the wreckers have disposed of *Harbor Hill*, *Oak Point*, Willys Mansion, Edwin D. Morgan's house, *Wheatley*, the Schiff mansion, *Seamoor*, the Brokaw mansion, and the Maxwell mansion. *Matinecock Point*, the late J. P. Morgan's famous estate, now owned by the city of Glen Cove, stands empty. It would cost nearly $40,000 to demolish and the city is trying to sell or lease it for institutional purposes. This has been the solution for about a dozen used as schools or colleges and about six which house religious orders. The remainder await buyers who will either adapt them or wreck them to sell bit by bit the fine mantels, silver bathroom fittings, crystal chandeliers and choice building materials.